

# RECOGNIZING THE LIFE AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF YEVGENY YEVTUSHENKO

## HON. GINNY BROWN-WAITE

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 20, 2003

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. Mr. Speaker, "A poet in Russia is more than a poet." Yevgeny Yevtushenko was speaking of poetry's unique role in Russia, but the words apply equally to Yevtushenko himself—the world's most famous living poet, and also prose writer, photographer, filmmaker, congressman, professor, world traveler. In the civic tradition of Russian poetry, the poet is the voice of the people, the ombudsman, the champion of truth and justice, and the catalyst for social change. Because poets express the strivings and needs of the people, they are revered in Russia as nowhere else. In the Soviet Union, the message had to be elliptic, and poetry was read closely, between the lines.

Yevgeny Yevtushenko, born in Zima Junction, Siberia in 1933, burst onto the scene when very young, his first poems published in 1949, when he was just sixteen. He and his peers, Akhmadulina, Voznesensky, Rozhdestvensky, drew enormous, agitated crowds to their readings, and their popularity could be compared only to that of rock stars. They shaped an entire generation, the generation of Gorbachev and Yeltsin, who began the changes that ultimately brought an end to the Soviet Union.

His famous poem "Babi Yar," against anti-Semitism, was written in 1961 and set to music by Shostakovich. In 1952, Yevtushenko wrote "the Heirs of Stalin," with a call to throw off the oppressive shadow of the tyrant. He began his nonpoetic political protest activity with a telegram to Brezhnev condemning the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968. Thirty years later, his political activity was channeled into a formal democratic role—he was elected a congressman with an overwhelming 74.9 percent of the vote (in a field of nine candidates). There was a national write-in-vote to select the cochairs to join Andrei Sakharov in leading the Memorial Society, dedicated to the memory of the victims of Stalinism. Yevtushenko was one of the three co-chairmen selected, further evidence of the faith in his integrity and appreciation of his outspokenness among his countrymen.

Yevgeny Yevtushenko traveled extensively, and he brought the world to the Soviet Union through his writing, but he also brought Russia to the world. In 1960, he was the first Russian poet to break through the Iron Curtain and to recite his poetry in the West, where he was befriended by Pablo Picasso, Max Ernst, Henry Moore, Federico Fellini, John Steinbeck, Graham Greene, Heinrich Böll, T.S. Eliot and Gabriel Garcia Marquez. Over the years, Yevtushenko has toured 94 countries, all of the republics of the USSR, and all of the states of the U.S.A. He has recited his poetry in sports arenas from Russia to Santiago, Chile (where he appeared with Pablo Neruda), in the Opera di Roma, in London's Albert Hall, in the Library of Congress, Smithsonian Institution, and National Cathedral in Washington, D.C., and in Madison Square Garden, Carnegie Hall, the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, and Lincoln Center in New York. His

works have been translated into 72 languages. Eighteen of his books have been translated into English. Most of his readers in France, Cambodia, Africa, Greenland, Australia, Germany, and China—among other places—have never been to Russia but they know and love Russian poetry.

Yevtushenko has been in the center of the action for fifty years. Yet his insatiable curiosity about the human experience and his monumental energy remain at their highest levels. He celebrated his seventieth birthday in Moscow this July, reading to enormous, adoring crowds, and then continued the extravaganza across the country, reaching out to his readers. His life is heartening proof that one man's voice, raised high and often, can alter the course of events.

Welcome all over the world, Yevgeny Yevtushenko and his wife, Masha, have chosen to divide their time between Russia and the United States, where they are bringing up their family. He is Distinguished Visiting Professor at The University of Tulsa, Oklahoma, and tenured at Queens College, in New York City. He has received numerous international prizes in literature and the arts. In addition to receiving four honorary degrees, he was elected an honorary member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters and a member of the European Academy of Arts and Sciences, was awarded The American Liberties Medal of the American Jewish Committee, and in 1999 was appointed Poet-in-Residence of the Walt Whitman House Museum in Long Island, New York. Naturally, he is writing poetry and a new novel and is in the finishing stages of a major anthology of Russian poetry. We are fortunate to have Yevgeny and Masha Yevtushenko in our country and even more fortunate to have them here at the Russian Fireworks gala.

## THE IMPACT OF LEFT-WING SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS ON THE JUDICIAL NOMINATION PROCESS

### HON. MARK E. SOUDER

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 20, 2003

Mr. SOUDER. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to introduce into the RECORD two more memos—written by Democratic congressional staff—that illustrate the extent to which liberal special interest groups are controlling the judicial nomination process. These groups have been allowed a virtual veto power over any nominee they dislike. For example, groups like the so-called People for the American Way have apparently been able to delay or block the approval of judges who do not share their antilaw enforcement views, while groups like the National Abortion Rights Action League (NARAL) have been given a similar veto power over anyone who doesn't agree that parents shouldn't even be notified that their child is considering an abortion. One nominee, according to the memos, had to be cleared with "the gay rights groups" before he would even be considered. These memos show just how far the process has deteriorated—and are a wake-up call to anyone who wants to see fairness and objectivity restored to our Federal judiciary.

## MEMORANDUM

To: Senator Kennedy.

Subject: Judges—Schedule for the Year & Chairing A Hearing.

### I. SCHEDULE FOR THE YEAR AND THE SHEDD AND COOK PROBLEMS

As you know, during your meeting with the groups, you and Schumer discussed approaching Leahy regarding the Shedd hearing. You proposed telling him that because of the number of unpublished opinions and the divisiveness of the nomination (angering the African American community prior to the election), you think we should refrain from having a hearing on Shedd in June. Based on the groups recommendation, you were also going to propose an end-of-June hearing on another nominee. The following has happened in the interim:

Lott approached Daschle with an unreasonable request for nominations hearings before the July 4th recess. Daschle told him "no" but approached Leahy to discuss a more aggressive hearing schedule. The proposed schedule is as follows:

June 13th Rogers—(6th Circuit)  
June 27th Shedd—(4th Circuit)  
July 18th Owen—(5th Circuit)  
August 1st Cook—(6th Circuit)  
September 5th Raggi—(2nd Circuit)  
September 19th Estrada—(DC Circuit)  
October 3rd McConnell—(10th Circuit)

The August 1st Cook hearing is a surprise to us, and it will be a huge problem for the judges coalition. For many, many months they have told us that Cook is highly problematic—particularly for labor. Cook is consistently bad on labor/workplace injury cases, right to jury trial issues, civil rights and rights of criminal defendants cases. Her frequent dissents (from the moderate majority) show a pattern at least as egregious as Pickering. We must press Leahy not to schedule Cook (Cook is strongly supported by DeWine, but how many times did Hatch disregard your request to move DC Circuit nominee Alan Snyder?).

Regarding Shedd, Wade Henderson spoke with Mark Childress, Daschle's Chief Counsel and Childress is going to speak with Hollings' staff director. But, because we feel Leahy will not cancel the Shedd hearing unless Hollings backs off (and because several of the outside groups believe the same), we don't think you should expend a great deal of effort trying to change Leahy's mind about the Shedd hearing.

Instead, you should speak with Schumer, and the two of you should bring Durbin up to speed (since he couldn't attend the meeting in your hideaway). The three of you should approach Leahy as soon as possible and tell Leahy that:

You are very concerned about Shedd because he has numerous unpublished opinions and because his nomination will infuriate the African-American community before the SC election, but you understand the Hollings problem. If Hollings can be moved, you propose postponing the Shedd hearing.

You understand he is contemplating a more aggressive hearing schedule that includes a hearing for Debbie Cook for the 6th Circuit; and you believe she should not get a hearing this year. For months, labor and other groups have told us that she is highly problematic, and we should send her nomination back to the White House. We won't suffer publicly if we don't have a nomination hearing for her.

Ultimately, if Leahy insists on having an August hearing, it appears that the groups are willing to let Tymkovich go through (the core of the coalition made that decision last night, but they are checking with the gay rights groups).